

**Agenda – Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services – June 6, 2013**

**REPORTS**

**Item No. 1                      Arson Strike Force Unit**

**WINNIPEG PUBLIC SERVICE RECOMMENDATION:**

This report is submitted for information purposes.

## **Agenda – Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services – June 6, 2013**

### **DECISION MAKING HISTORY:**

### **STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:**

On March 11, 2013, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services granted a further extension of time of up to 90 days for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

On February 19, 2013, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services granted a further extension of time to its March 11, 2013 for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

On January 14, 2013, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services granted an extension of time to its February 19, 2013 for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back on the matter.

On October 29, 2012, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services granted a further extension of time to its meeting on January 14, 2013 for the Winnipeg Public Service to report back as requested on March 9, 2012.

On October 1, 2012, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services laid over the matter to its meeting on October 29, 2012.

On March 9, 2012, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services received as information the Winnipeg Public Service report on the Arson Strike Force Unit.

Further on March 9, 2012, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services requested that the Winnipeg Public Service provide an update on the matter in October 2012.

# ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**Title:** *Arson Unit – Activity Review*

**Critical Path:** *Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Service*

## AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
Supt D. Smyth Cr. Analyst C. Brown	Acting Chief of Police A. Stannard	n/a	D. Joshi COO

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is submitted for information purposes.

## REASON FOR THE REPORT

The Standing Policy Committee on Protection and Community Services requested the Winnipeg Police Service to provide an update on the arson activity in Winnipeg for 2012.

## HISTORY

The Arson Strike Force Unit is comprised of members of the Winnipeg Police Service, the Winnipeg Fire Department, and the Office of the Fire Commissioner. The Unit was established in 1999 in response to growing concerns about arson activity in Winnipeg; the Unit has been dedicated to investigating arsons exclusively since that time.

## Fires and Arson Investigation Protocol

Fires that require an emergency response are typically received through a 911 operator. The Fire Department is dispatched to respond to the fire. The fire scene is managed by the Fire Department. The Winnipeg Fire Department Incident Chief is in command of all fire suppression operations.

The Winnipeg Police Service is also dispatched to structural fires. Police provide support to the Fire Department. Victim services, traffic control, witness identification, and area security are general duties of the police.

In addition, a Winnipeg Fire Department Investigator is notified of all structural fires. The Investigator will attend to the scene for the purpose of assessing the fire to determine origin. Often, if a scene is complex, the expertise of an Investigator from the Office of the Fire Commissioner is required to determine the origins of the fire. If the fire is determined to be arson, or involves fatalities, the Detective Sergeant of the Arson Unit is contacted to initiate a criminal investigation.

The Winnipeg Fire Department is also dispatched to non-structural fires; vehicle fires, garbage fires, and grass fires are typical examples of non-structural fires. In many cases these types of fires are extinguished and no further investigative action is taken. Often, Winnipeg Fire Department Fire Investigators do not attend the scene, and police are not notified of the occurrence. Investigation and police notification is left to the discretion of the Fire Department Incident Commander.

In summary, all structural fires are subject to a fire investigation to determine the fire origin. The fire investigation is conducted by Winnipeg Fire Department Investigators in conjunction with Investigators from the Office of the Fire Commissioner. Structural fires determined to be arsons, or suspicious in nature, are subject to a criminal investigation. The criminal investigation is conducted by members of the Winnipeg Police Service (who are also dedicated members of the Arson Unit). All non-structural fires may be subject to a fire investigation at the discretion of the Fire Department Incident Commander.

## **Annual Arson Activity**

Cautionary Note: The Winnipeg Police Service keeps electronic records in a Record Management System. This report references data collected by the Winnipeg Fire Department and the Winnipeg Police Service. Reported fires, and occurrences of arson have proven to be problematic because there are different practices and methodologies for collecting and qualifying data. Non-structural fires, particularly vehicle fires, garbage fires, and grass fires, are not consistently reported to the Winnipeg Police Service. This results in greater data variance.

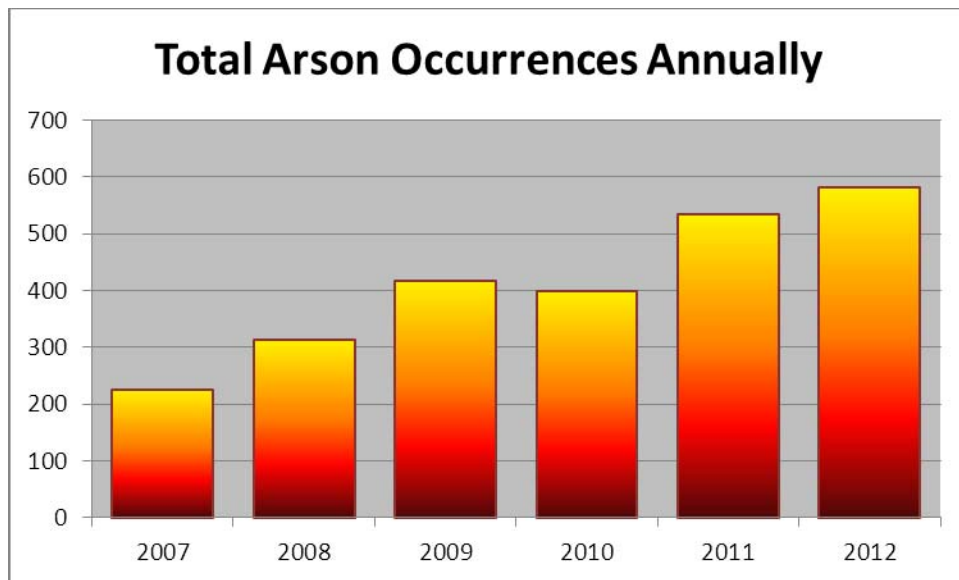
The Crime Analyst assigned to the Crime Analysis Unit compiled a summary of arson investigations from 2007 – 2012. This data set does not include all arsons because fire investigators and police are not necessarily notified or called upon to investigate many non-structural fires like garbage fires.

General observations were noted during analysis:

- For the past 6 years the number of arson occurrences has increased.
- District 3 has the highest annual number of arson investigations.
- Arsonists are typically youths and repeat arsonists tend to progress into other crimes.
- In 2012, garbage fires account for 25% of the overall Arson – Property investigations entered by the Winnipeg Police Service.

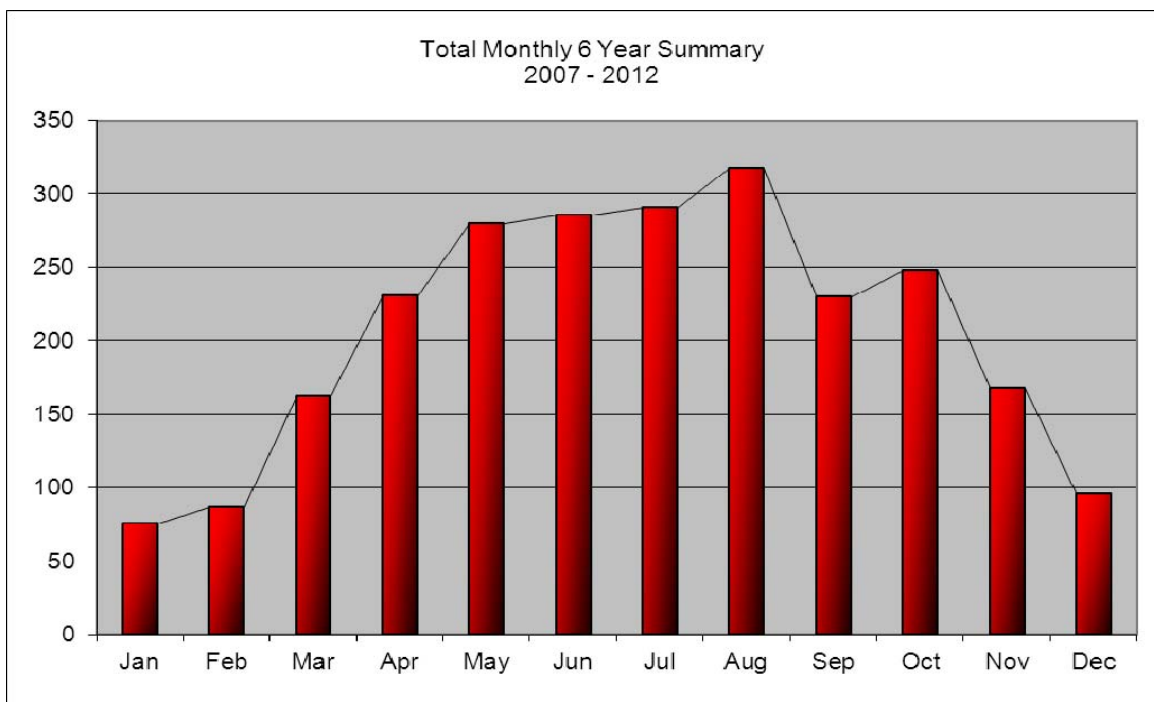
## Notable Information

### Annual Trends



### Monthly Trends

April through October averages 38 to 53 fires per month with the highest number of arson occurring in July (80) and August (102) of 2012, and June (88) of 2012. January has had the lowest number of arsons for the past five years with an average of 8 arsons for the month until 2012 when it reached 32 in January. (There have been 17 in January 2013 which is still above average for January).



Source: Winnipeg Police Service Crime Analysis Unit

## Location Trends

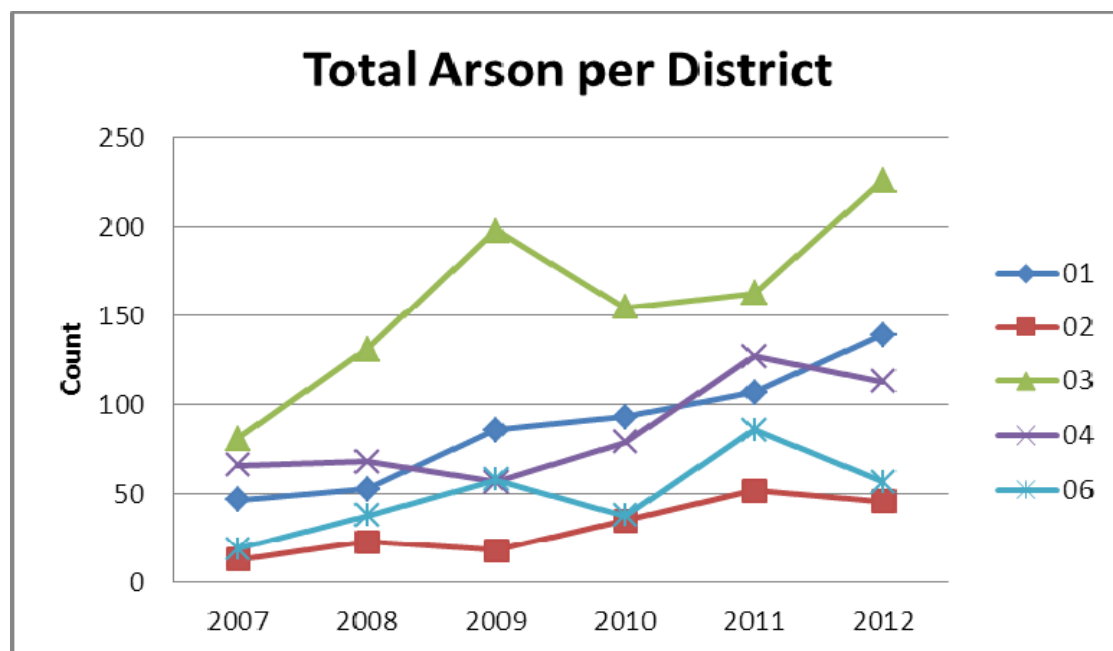
District 3 continues to have the highest number of arsons in 2012. District 1 and 3 had increases in the number of arsons compared to the previous year where all other Districts saw a decrease. William Whyte continues to have the highest annual arson count and the highest 6 year average.

Garbage/Recycling Bins and Detached Garages account for almost half of the total arsons from 2012. (See Appendix B for complete list.)

### *Percent change from 2011 to 2012*

District	Percent Change
01	30%
02	-12%
03	39%
04	-11%
06	-34%

### Annual Arsons by District



Source: Winnipeg Police Service Crime Analysis Unit

## Offender Profiles

**2012 Offenders** – 90 individuals have been arrested or cautioned for 73 of the 583 occurrences in 2012.

**Repeat Offenders**—607 people have been arrested or cautioned for arson related occurrences between 2007 and 2012. Of those, 98 people have been identified as repeat offenders; having been subject to more than one arrest or caution.

**Chronic Offenders**—chronic offenders are identified as those that have been charged or cautioned with arson offences in more than one calendar year. Of the 78 people identified as repeat offenders, 25 people have offended in multiple years. Chronic offenders average 5 offences and have ranged from 2 arrests or cautions, on the low end of the spectrum, to 44 arrests or cautions, on the high end of the spectrum. Five (5) chronic offenders have continued to offend in 2012, and there were 8 new repeat offenders in 2012.

## Conclusion

Arson activity remains a concern in Winnipeg. Strategies for 2013 will include:

1. Refuse Removal.
  - Continued public awareness strategies to educate the public.
  - Working with solid waste management to address neighborhood refuse concerns.
2. Monitoring Repeat Offenders.
  - Working with schools through the School Resource Officer Program.
  - Exploring opportunities with Probation Service for monitoring and supervision.
3. Fire Data Collection
  - Working with the Winnipeg Fire Department to ensure that fires considered suspicious or arson are consistently reported to the Winnipeg Police Service at the time of the fire.

**Financial Impact Statement**Date: **March 11, 2013****Project Name:**  
**Arson Unit Activity****First Year of Program** **2013**

	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
<b>Capital</b>					
Capital Expenditures Required	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Capital Budget Required	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
<b>Funding Sources:</b>					
Debt - Internal	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Enter Description Here	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	<u>\$ -</u>				
Total Additional Debt Required	<u>\$ -</u>				
<b>Current Expenditures/Revenues</b>					
Direct Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	-	-	-	-	-
Net Cost/(Benefit)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	-	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
<b>Additional Comments: For information only</b>					

original signed by Ron Smolik May 22/13  
Controller - Winnipeg Police Service

**SUBMITTED BY**

Department: Winnipeg Police Service  
Criminal Investigations Bureau  
Prepared by: Supt. D. Smyth & Crime Analyst C. Brown  
Date: Amended May 13, 2013  
File No.



## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A:

#### Annual Winnipeg Police Arson Investigation Totals

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Grand Total
Total Arsons by Occurrence	226	314	417	400	535	583	2475
Closed - Arrest Made (count of occurrences where individuals have been arrested or cautioned)	92	107	80	77	88	73	517
Persons Arrested (Count of individuals arrested or cautioned for arson)	134	159	85	89	81	90	638

## APPENDIX B:

### 2012 Winnipeg Police Arson Investigation Activity by Category

Location Type Description	Total	Category	Percent of Total
COMMERCIAL-Clothing	1	26	4%
COMMERCIAL-Convenience Store	1		
COMMERCIAL-Electronics	1		
COMMERCIAL-Fast Food	3		
COMMERCIAL-Financial Institution (Bank)	1		
COMMERCIAL-Gas Station/Convenience Store	1		
COMMERCIAL-Golf Course	1		
COMMERCIAL-Hotel/Motel	1		
COMMERCIAL-Other	12		
COMMERCIAL-Shed	1		
COMMERCIAL-Under Construction	2		
COMMERCIAL-Vehicle Repair	1		
Dumpster	15	148	25%
Garbage/Recycling Bins	133		
PUBLIC BUILDING-Church/Religious Building	2	5	1%
PUBLIC BUILDING-Community Centre	3		
PUBLIC PLACE-Bus Stop	1	65	11%
PUBLIC PLACE-Other	8		
PUBLIC PLACE-Park	11		
PUBLIC PLACE-Parking Lot	9		
PUBLIC PLACE-Railway Tracks	2		
PUBLIC PLACE-Street	34		
RESIDENCE-Apartment/Condo Suite	22	89	15%
RESIDENCE-House	49		
RESIDENCE-Garage-Attached	1		
RESIDENCE-Duplex/Fourplex	10		
RESIDENCE-Rooming House Unit	7		
*RESIDENCE-Other	26	26	4%
RESIDENCE-Driveway	5	41	7%
RESIDENCE-Parking Lot	12		
RESIDENCE-Parking Pad/Carport	24		
RESIDENCE-Garage-Detached	123	129	22%
RESIDENCE-Shed	6		
School	9	16	3%
School area	6		
University	1		
*Vehicle	37	37	6%
Fenced Compound	1	1	0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>583</b>		

Source: Winnipeg Police Service Crime Analysis Unit

\*Residence - Other includes fences, gazebos, clothelines

Vehicle Category added in 2012 (previously \*Residence - Parking or Driveway captured vehicles)